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Initial teacher training: understanding ‘race’, diversity and inclusion

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Abstract

There is little research which has explored how students on Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses understand and conceptualise discourses of ‘race’, diversity and inclusion. This article will focus on student understandings of racialised identities; it will explore the discourses by which students understand what it means to be White and what it means to be Black, within the context of ITT. The article will examine the different facets and themes of identity within the context of belonging and exclusion which exist within higher education in the cultural and social contexts of English universities. The data for this article is based on interviews conducted with a total of thirty students who were training to become teachers on primary and secondary PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate of Secondary Education) courses at two universities in the South of England. The majority of students who agreed to be interviewed were from White backgrounds and only a small minority were from BME (Black and minority ethnic backgrounds). The findings indicate that students’ understandings of ‘race’, diversity and inclusion on ITT courses are complex and multifaceted. Many of the students were aware of the importance of these issues, but were unsure about how to approach these subjects in the classroom, particularly in relation to how they would be taught. Many also felt unequipped when thinking about how they would deal with racist incidents in the classroom. The article argues that greater training is needed in relation to the practical assistance that student teachers require in terms of increasing their understanding of diversity and dealing with racism in the classroom. There is also a need to examine the impact of the Equality Act (2010) on ITT courses and the teaching of ‘race’, diversity and inclusion.

281 words

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Introduction

There have been some significant changes in policy making in relation to educational equality and inclusion in England in the last few years. The most significant policy change has been the introduction of the *Equality Act* in 2010. The *Equality Act* replaced all previous equality legislation such as the *Race Relations Act (1976)*, *Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000)*, *Disability Discrimination Act (2005)* and *Sex Discrimination Act (1975)*. The significance of the Act is that it provides one single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. It simplifies the law by removing anomalies and inconsistencies that have developed over time in the existing legislation, and it extends protection from discrimination in certain areas.

In terms of education, particularly schools, the effect of the new law is the same as it has been in the past – schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, ‘race’, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Protection is now extended to pupils who are pregnant or undergoing gender reassignment. The exceptions to the discrimination provisions for schools that existed under previous legislation – such as the content of the curriculum, collective worship and admissions to single-sex schools and schools of a religious character, are all replicated in the new act. However, there are some changes that will have an impact on schools. Under the new duties, schools will be expected to publish their equality information and objectives, which will also be required to be regularly updated. Positive action provision will allow schools to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by pupils with particular protected characteristics (for example providing special catch-up classes for Roma children or a project to engage specifically with alienated Asian boys) (EHRC no date). In 2002, Citizenship was introduced as a statutory subject in the English National Curriculum, following the recommendations of the *Crick Report* in 1998. Citizenship is taught as part of the school curriculum to all pupils aged 11–16 years old in maintained schools in England. The *Adjebo Report* was published in 2007 and emphasised the complexity of understanding diversity and inclusion. The report recognised the different understandings of the term ‘British’ and acknowledged that people construct identities in multiple and plural ways. Adjebo also noted that respondents shared concerns that the term ‘Britishness’ has the potential to be divisive and can be used as a means of excluding particular groups. Moreover, defining the term is problematic (Adjebo 2007).

Some academics have called for the vague term ‘Britishness’ to be replaced with citizenship and equal rights (Parekh, 2007; Khan, 2007). Furthermore, in relation to teacher training the report states, ‘The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) should evaluate the effectiveness of education for diversity across initial teacher training (ITT) providers. Local authorities should be encouraged to develop lead Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs)¹ with a specific brief for education for diversity. This should be disseminated across the authority as part of outreach. Schools should be encouraged to use the flexibilities in the teaching and learning responsibility points of the teachers’ pay structure to promote excellence in education for diversity within the school’ (p22). However, some authors have recognised problems with issues of diversity and citizenship in schools, for example Osler states that the ‘identity and diversity’ strand in the citizenship curriculum may become a new placebo. ‘If schools promote a depoliticised multiculturalism which does not encourage political literacy or critical analysis, there is a real danger that this will leave unchallenged (and possibly disguise) the considerable inequalities within schools, while allowing individual institutions to assert that they are fulfilling their duty to promote community cohesion’ (Osler, 2009: 14).

Currently in the National Curriculum in England, citizenship is taught at Key Stage 3 (age 11-14) and Key Stage 4 (age 14-16) as foundation subjects in schools. However, the recent review of the National Curriculum reports little support for the retention of citizenship in the National Curriculum (DfES, 2011). ‘Despite their importance in balanced educational provision, we are not entirely persuaded of claims that design and technology, information and communication technology and citizenship have sufficient disciplinary coherence to be stated as discrete and separate National Curriculum subjects’ (DfES, 2011:24). Instead the report recommends, ‘citizenship is of enormous importance in a contemporary and future-oriented education. However, we are not persuaded that study of the issues and topics included in citizenship education constitutes a distinct ‘subject’ as such. We therefore recommend that it be reclassified as part of the Basic Curriculum’ (DfES, 2011: 24). The report whilst acknowledging the importance of citizenship recommends its reclassification without considering the need to address the training issue highlighted in the Adjebo Report. The curriculum review on diversity and citizenship found that teachers lack confidence and knowledge about these issues and often side step them (DCSF, 2007). Indeed, many teachers may not have had adequate training to deal confidently with such complex issues in class. Where diversity and citizenship were taught, lessons were found to be ‘unsatisfactory or

¹ Under the new Coalition Government the TDA and AST were scrapped and no longer exist.

lacking in conceptual depth' (ibid, p.96). Some schools which attempt to include diversity within the curriculum lack the understanding to address its implications sensitively and correctly. This can lead to pupils viewing and experiencing diversity negatively implying that 'only minority groups have 'diversity'...' (Maylor, 2010 p. 248). A number of reports highlight the need for enhanced ITT and an expansion of ITT places in citizenship and the need for ITT to be informed by a developing research evidence base (Kerr, *et al.*, 2007). This may be threatened if the coalition government's plans to downgrade citizenship to the basic curriculum are realised.

This article will focus on trainee teachers' understandings of racialised identities; it will explore the discourses by which **trainee teachers** understand what it means to be White and what it means to be Black², within the context of ITT. The article will examine the different facets and themes of identity within the context of belonging and exclusion which exist within higher education in the cultural and social contexts of English universities.

Context and Background

There is a growing body of research that examines the ability and willingness of **trainee teachers** to understand and engage in issues associated with 'race', diversity, inclusion and identity in the classroom (Ambe, 2006; Santoro & Allard, 2005). These studies (mainly drawn from areas such as North America, Europe and Australasia) show a mismatch between the ethnic identity of the teaching population (which is predominantly White and in some cases it has been pointed out female and middle class) and that of the **student** intake which is increasingly becoming ethnically mixed.

There have been some attempts to address concerns about the teaching of 'race' and inclusion on ITT courses. This has included a focus on teacher training and the development of programmes to encourage trainee teachers to understand issues associated with 'race', diversity and educational inclusion (see Causey, Thomas and Armento, 2000; Mills, 2008, 2009). These programmes consisted of university teaching sessions, school placements in very diverse settings and a period for reflection and discussion post school placement. They have resulted in varied success. Positive short term outcomes have been reported but these

² We use the term 'Black' as a political term to refer to those from non-white minority ethnic groups who are positioned as 'other' due to their racial identity (see Bhopal and Danaher, forthcoming 2013).

changes have not been sustained in the early years of professional practice (Causey, Thomas and Armento, 2000). Much of the research has focused on identifying misconceptions and preconceptions around 'race' and diversity (see Garcia & Lopez, 2005). Korthagen *et al* (2001) argue that it is possible to work with trainee teachers only after they themselves know that their own stereotypes have to be challenged. However, other researchers have shown that the impact of such interventions is not as effective, and can be quite limiting (Hollins and Guzman; Sleeter, 2001). Furthermore, research into these areas has raised methodological concerns regarding the sample size and lack of details on the context and the overuse of self-reporting methods. (Hollins and Guzman, 2005; Sleeter, 2001). The reasons for this remain complex, but part of the problem may be that the lecturers and tutors themselves may not be particularly knowledgeable about such issues and so may lack the confidence to support trainee teachers effectively (Hick *et al*, 2011).

Research has also found that few courses on teacher training in the USA facilitate teachers' understandings of race, diversity and culture (Ladson-Billings, 1990). By contrast, through engagement in diversity focused teacher education courses, pre-service teachers can gain greater critical insight into the effects of diversity upon teaching and learning (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 2001). Research in Australia suggests that teachers have a responsibility to teach in a way that is anti-discriminatory and inclusive of all students irrespective of students' backgrounds (Aveling, 2002; Bhopal and Danaher, 2013). Other research suggests that teacher education programs must take a multicultural perspective in order to contribute to principles of social justice (Levine Rasky, 2001; Solomon *et al*, 2005). Equally, Picower's (2009) study explores how White pre-service teachers' life-experiences shape their understanding of race which in fact maintains their dominant and stereotypical understandings of the meaning of race in the classroom.

The identity of teachers and its relationship to the educational achievement of some minority ethnic groups has been highlighted in England. For example, Maylor's research (2009) has shown that some teachers exhibit unintentional racism towards students, whereas Rhamie (2007) highlights how many African Caribbean pupils have negative experiences at school in which they receive little support and encouragement from teachers and in which they perceive a sense of being treated differently from their White peers. Recent research suggests that there are several reasons associated with which institutions students from BME backgrounds decide to attend when thinking about teacher training. Smith (2007) examines how these decisions are sometimes complex and based on a diverse range of factors such as

ethnicity, class and gender as well as a desire to study locally and, 'how living and learning in a predominantly 'White' environment leads to different preferences in terms of the ethnicity of university populations' (p.433). Bhopal (2010) has also found that when choosing a degree course many students from Asian backgrounds are more likely to want to study at their local universities due to the presence of a 'critical mass' which will ensure a sense of belonging and provide support – rather than choosing to study far away from their homes. Lander's research (2011) has found that the language used by trainee teachers when examining issues associated with BME pupils is seen in relation to 'otherness' and many feel unequipped to deal with issues to do with 'race', particularly if students are in predominantly White areas where there is little or no perceived ethnic diversity. This has further implications for inclusive policy making and ITT as well as questioning Whiteness as being, 'neutral, colour-blind and liberal' (Lander, 2011: p362). Smith and Lander (2011) further examine how Whiteness operates to reinforce inequitable power relations in teaching in ITT, particularly when students' racist assumptions of teacher ability are often based on perceptions of 'race'. Wilkins and Lall (2011) in their recent research report how on the one hand BME trainee teachers report positive experiences on ITT courses, but on the other hand, they also report being isolated and experiencing stereotypical attitudes towards them from their White peers as well as examples of overt racism in school placements. Bhopal, Harris, and Rhamie (2009) in their research found that the majority of trainee teachers had an understanding of the key issues associated with 'race', diversity and inclusion they all felt these issues should be central to all ITT programmes. Furthermore, the majority of respondents in the research wanted specific sessions on 'how to deal with racist incidents'. The research (like others) points out that future educational policy making should include a compulsory course for ITT students on issues to do with 'race', diversity and inclusion as well as continuous professional development for all students and teachers on for example the legal updates around equality and equal opportunities.

Research carried out by Davies and Crozier (2006) has examined the extent of training provision in England regarding issues to do with diversity, 'race' and inclusion. The findings suggest that the majority of providers had policies relating to equality and diversity but policies for tackling racism in schools were not consistent across the board. Furthermore, 'race' and diversity were addressed in relation to students with English as an Additional Language (EAL), and there was little coverage of these issues when students were in predominantly White higher education institutions.

The majority of respondents in this study felt that there was a need for further development in this area. Many of the ITT providers employed generic lectures, ~~and~~ key readings and the use of visiting speakers to address issues of diversity. Some said that diversity permeated the curriculum, while others said that it needed further development. Many of the programmes did not address racism, underachievement or teacher expectations, although some providers did refer to the Race Relations (*Amendment*) Act (RRAA, 2000) but did not require the trainees to consider the implications of the RRAA for their own practice. The recent introduction of the Equalities Act 2010 has brought all individual equality legislation under the same Act. While there is clearly justification for harmonising legislation for various aspects of equality such as disability, gender, sex and race, under a single equality act there are risks in doing so. The new Act has contributed to a growing trend for race and matters relating to racism becoming invisible (Tomlinson, 2011; ROTA, 2012). The new OFSTED framework for inspecting schools and providers of teacher education has removed the requirement to inspect for race equality (OFSTED 2012). This has the potential to negatively impact the importance and value given to matters relating to race and addressing racism on teacher training courses given the emphasis on the national priorities of Early maths, Phonics, behaviour management English as an additional language EAL and Special Educational Needs SEN. Furthermore, schools are no longer required to record data by race and ethnicity neither do they have to address race directly but can focus on poverty, disability or gender. As a result of this there is less likely to be a focus on matters relating to race, ethnicity, diversity and inclusion in ITT programmes (Tomlinson, 2011) .

Davies and Crozier (2006) suggest that ‘race’ and anti-racism need to be addressed overtly on ITT programmes and discussing issues to do with ‘race’ cannot be an ‘add on’ or a tokenistic response or measure. The recruitment and retention of BME trainees onto courses was also a cause for concern. On the one hand this was seen as an advantage but on the other hand the targets set by institutions were seen as being unrealistic. There was insufficient advice and guidance in this area and there was a crucial need for continuing professional development on ‘race’ and diversity for all trainees as well as consistency across the programmes.

Gurin *et al* (2002) have argued that different types of diversity have to be addressed in order for it to be effective in teaching: structural diversity, informal interactional diversity and classroom diversity. Moreover, ‘We contend that students educated in diverse institutions will be more motivated and better able to participate in an increasingly heterogeneous and

complex society' (p. 339). Similarly, Orfield (2001) has found that there are a variety of individual, institutions and societal benefits that are linked to the teaching of diversity.

Research has shown that teachers are not well prepared to teach diverse students whose cultural values are different from their own (Santoro, 2009), and that many White teachers hold negative stereotypical views about minority ethnic children and have little knowledge of cultural diversity (Sleeter, 2008). Such trainees then attribute those children's academic failure to home and cultural backgrounds, rather than questioning their own pedagogies (Chubbuck, 2010; Sleeter, 2008). Many programmes that try to deal with diversity are simply 'add ons' that do not deal directly with issues of diversity and inclusion (McDonald, 2005). As society is becoming more and more diverse, the teacher population must reflect this diversity if it is to take seriously the notion of social justice and multiculturalism. The qualities that teachers should have include 'a sense of mission, solidarity with, and empathy for their students, the courage to challenge mainstream knowledge, improvisation and a passion for social justice' (Nieto, 2006, p. 463).

In view of the issues identified in the literature and the importance of these matters in ensuring that teachers are prepared and equipped to teach in diverse schools this paper aims to report on research undertaken to explore trainee teachers' understandings of 'race', diversity and inclusion. The research aims were:

1. What are the views of trainee teachers' on the teaching of 'race', diversity and inclusion on ITT courses?
2. To what extent do trainee teachers' understandings of these issues above affect their teaching practice in the classroom?
3. How well are trainee teachers equipped to deal with issues of diversity in the classroom?

Methodology

The data for this article is based on interviews conducted with a total of thirty students who were training to become teachers on primary and secondary PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate of Secondary Education) courses at two universities in the South of England. The majority of respondents who agreed to be interviewed were from White backgrounds (18) and almost half were from minority ethnic backgrounds. Five were from Black Caribbean backgrounds,

five were Asian and two were mixed race (Black/White). Only 3 respondents were male. A total of ten interviews were conducted in University A and twenty interviews with students in University B. The research took place over a period of three years from 2009-2011. Both of the universities which participated in the research are traditional 'red brick' (research intensive) universities and located in the South of England. The research conducted in University A also consisted of a questionnaire completed by a total of 59 trainee teachers on PGCE courses. This paper will present findings from the in-depth interviews from both universities. The research conducted in University A was part of a funded project (see Bhopal, Harris and Rhamie, 2009 for further details of the research).

The interviews addressed such issues as how respondents understood the concepts of 'race', diversity and inclusion (before they joined the course and their present understanding whilst on the course); whether trainee teachers felt equipped to deal with issues of diversity and 'race' in the classroom; how respondents understood their own identity (as being Black, Asian or White) and whether they felt their own identity would affect interactions and dynamics in the classroom.

All of the interviews were tape-recorded and the data transcribed. The interviews lasted on average for one hour. The data was analysed by using methods of grounded theory as developed by Charmaz (2006). Particular themes associated with identity and the complexities of student identities in relation to their roles as future teachers were examined. The data was analysed to explore how the different themes were interrelated and the discourses participants used to describe their accounts and their experiences of being on a teacher training course. The data was analysed by using codes for particular themes and developing these codes into categories which would form the basis of our understanding of the discourses respondents used to discuss their experiences. Grounded theory was developed by comparing responses and making sense of the meanings attached to them. Consequently we were able to develop our notion of grounded theory which was an emerging process in the data. Critical Race theory underpinned the theoretical approach to the data analysis. Critical Race theory acknowledges and foregrounds race suggesting that Whiteness is normalised in society and others are positioned in relation to this norm. This recognition of race and racism provides a useful means of legitimising investigations into these issues while valuing the experiences and stories of participants. It also seeks to work against the marginalisation of race in current discourse (Ladson-Billings, 2004).

The Findings

The complexity of identity

When trainee teachers were asked about their experiences of being White, they translated this as something which was seen in terms of privilege. Many of them were reflective about their own identities and saw this in terms of being in a position of advantage. Yet at the same time, they did not think that their identity would have a significant effect on their pupils – regardless of the pupils' backgrounds. Julian who described himself from a middle class background said,

As a White student I know that I am privileged, but I also think that if I am a good teacher I don't think that my identity should affect my pupils because I am a teacher first. It doesn't matter where my pupils come from; as long as I am a good teacher then I should be able to get the best out of them.

John³ was White and had thought somewhat about his own identity and the affect it had on his choice of career as a teacher.

It doesn't mean a huge amount to me, being White it's just a label. I think we all make a great play of backgrounds, but ultimately we're all humans aren't we? But I suppose it doesn't work like that in practice, does it? I hate to say so, but being European, or White is seen as being advantaged. You still get some people who think with old ideas and so treat you in a certain way because of their racial views. I think I have a great place to offer in the classroom as a role model because I don't think we have enough diversity in education and because of that it's up to White people to influence that in how they teach and what they say about people who are not in a privileged position like us because they are Black.

John was from a privileged background, yet he felt disadvantaged because of this privilege.

I kind of can feel, but not really know what it's like to be treated differently because of you're not White but know what it's like for people to treat you in a certain way because of the way you are. I went to an independent school and so I speak in a posh

³ All names are pseudonyms.

way and sometimes people will treat me in a certain way. I don't tell people I went to an independent school because it would mean they would judge me because of that.

Meena on the other hand was adamant that her identity – her 'race' and gender (which she could not disguise) made a significant difference to how she was treated in the classroom.

There are issues on how you are treated in schools, both by the teachers and the pupils. If they see you as an Asian female then they will treat you in a certain way – usually based on stereotypes and if you are a White male you will be treated in a different way. Sometimes, these things are not intentional, they are not thought about and other times they are very intentional and they are meant to make you feel in a certain way.

Meena felt her identity as an Asian female who was also from a working class background – with a strong Midlands accent made her conscious of her identity. This also demonstrated the complexity of identities within the classroom and how the intersectionality of identity – based on 'race', gender and class – were all contributory factors in how trainee teachers were perceived by others, but also how they perceived themselves. Both Meena and John were aware of their intersecting identities and the effects of this on their own presence in the classroom. Julie on the other hand was quite open about her Black identity and the negative effects it had on her life and her educational experience.

I know that Black women are seen in a certain sort of way and because I am a big woman as well, I am seen as someone with attitude. But that can be a good thing; it depends on how you use that attitude! I am convinced that I am judged because of what I look like and that can be negative. Some of the pupils in the school have treated me differently and I don't think they would treat a White female in that way. There is racism in schools and we are aware of it, but it's how you deal with it. You could be negative about it, or you could turn it into a positive – by showing that you are a professional and that you are good at what you do.

Although Julie was aware and open about racism (some of which she herself had experienced), she was equally pragmatic and philosophical about her approach in how she dealt with it in the classroom.

It [experiencing racism] would have to be dealt with properly, but being a Black person, we are told by our family that we should always be professional in what we do. That is the best way because then there is always that notion that you were as

professional as you could be – rather than starting to argue, swear or be aggressive – which is in a way what people want you to do and think you will do.

These respondents noted the challenges presented by their individual racialised identities. For the Asian and Black females it was clear that they had to manage not just the differential treatment they received but had to consciously behave in ways to challenge the stereotypical expectations placed upon them.

Understanding diversity, 'race' and inclusion

Many of the trainee teachers' understanding of issues to do with diversity, 'race' and inclusion were related to their own experiences of not just schooling but also the way they themselves were brought up. Both of Sally's parents were teachers and she had a complex understanding of these issues. Sally described herself from a 'liberal White middle class background'.

For me, those things are about variety. A variety and difference of culture, religion and your background. As a teacher you're faced with diverse teachers and diverse schools so your pupils are not all going to be the same. There will be diversity of race and diversity of religion and social background. Family background is very important and you have to learn to deal with that kind of background in the classroom where you are expected to create a sense of community for the pupils and in the school.

Sally went on to explain that understanding diversity was difficult as the concept of identity was a 'slippery issue'.

There is so much diversity that it is very difficult to define what we mean by diversity. For example if you say someone is White, they could be White but they could also be mixed race – White and something else – or they could be Polish or White European and that means something different again. I think it's too general to say that 'this is how Whiteness or Blackness is perceived in society' and it could be perceived in a negative way as well.

In a similar respect, Jeanette who was from a Black Caribbean background understood the complexity of these issues.

I think being a teacher your identity is very important but to look at these things – diversity and inclusion in the classroom is really about integration to me. For example if you are an Asian person – obviously you don't look White – but you are British, you are integrated because of the way you speak and have the same culture as White British – but you still look different and you may be treated differently because of this. So I just don't think it's that simple. As a Black person, I would say I am treated differently because I am not White, I am Black but I am integrated and I am British – but I am still seen as being different.

Carl one of the few male Black trainee teachers on the course emphasised,

Becoming a teacher, I never considered the impact my colour or background would have on it. I mean honestly and this may be naïve, the only things I thought would have an impact on my perceptions of becoming a teacher were things like the education I have had and whether that's going to impact on the kinds of schools that will want me. But it isn't like that in reality, because all schools have their prejudices and they may not want me – a Black male – to teach in their school, for whatever reason that may be.

The acknowledgement of the complexity of their own experiences of diversity, 'race' and inclusion supports the need for further opportunities for student teachers to address these issues in depth rather than relying on the often superficial and simplistic approach adopted in their training.

The practicalities of dealing with 'race'/racism in the classroom

The majority of trainee teachers did not feel equipped to deal with racist incidents in the classroom. Many stressed the importance of knowing how to deal with such incidents, particularly in relation to 'race', but also 'otherness'. Jane a White student said,

I don't know how I would deal with these incidents and we're not really told how we should do it on a practical basis. We do have some input about equality issues but it seems to be separate from the rest of the course. More on these aspects, not just about 'race', but about kids who are having other problems and who are different should be included in the course.

Jeanette also indicated the importance of this.

I think as a teacher you have to know how to deal with these issues because you have to make sure you do it properly. But as a Black person I think it would make me cross, because I am Black and it would be hurtful to think that children can behave like that [be racist]. The other issue is also the fear that you may experience racism from their teachers and their pupils and I know people who have had those experiences and that must be hard to deal with.

Farah, an Asian Muslim had similar experiences.

I think people do judge me because I wear a headscarf and they have assumptions about my identity. I have had pupils say things to me, but to be honest I am not so sure if they have been dealt with in the appropriate way. I think that being different in schools can be a good thing but it can also have its disadvantages because you stand out and you risk being called names and discriminated against.

Maria, a White student had witnessed one of her pupils call another pupil a racist name and was clear that the school could have dealt with it differently.

To be honest when it happened I was very upset and couldn't believe that kids still behave like that – just using bad names – and it made me think about why it happens. The schools just don't know how to deal with these things and so tend to go overboard and tell everyone off. But they just focus on that person and think about why he did it – it's not everyone else's fault that you have one bad apple. And we are not taught on our course how to deal with it, we are just taught about the theories of difference.

Maria felt it was more about how children learnt about other cultures in the classroom which affected how they treated Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups.

I think one of the big things is that kids learn about racism and how to be racist. I don't think we teach enough about the history of our nation to kids and why we are so diverse and why we have a rich mix of cultures. And I think if kids know about the history, they won't harbour resentment towards BME groups, because there seems to be a lot of resentment about BME groups and immigration and some people feel

animosity towards them. They say they can't speak English, shouldn't be here, blah blah – and they don't know about the history.

The lack of knowledge and confidence in how to deal with racist incidents is clear in these accounts which highlight the importance of adequate ITT provision in this respect. But they also point to the failure of ITT to adequately prepare trainee teachers to effectively and confidently deal with racist incidents despite 40 years of race policy and legislation.

Dealing with 'otherness' in the classroom

Many of the respondents when they spoke about their experiences in the classroom, quite often referred to the notion of 'difference' and what can be termed as the 'other'. There was an indication that there were many differences which existed in the classroom and in some sense they could not all be tackled, but in another sense it was important to make every effort to ensure that they were in fact *recognised* – if they could not be tackled. These differences were related to issues of social class background. These differences included language, accent, their approach to education, the kind of support they received at home and religion. Some of the trainees were teaching in diverse schools (though not all) and those who were, referred to aspects of religious difference and identity, which they felt made a big difference to notions of the 'other'. For some, this was in relation to Muslim identity and for others, (in schools with high numbers of Polish pupils) Catholicism. However, it was the physical markers of 'race' which were identified as being the most prominent markers of difference which continued to have the biggest impact on aspects of how trainee teachers were seen. Several spoke about this. Mary, a White student spoke about this 'otherness' in detail.

There are lots of things you have to think about as a teacher when you are in the classroom. One of the issues is – are you treating everyone the same – are you treating them by taking into consideration that they are different? There are many things that we need to think about, these days the issue of religion is very important. With all the changes going on in society, you have to be sensitive to that difference. You have to think about what you teach – and what other students say – and the impact this has on the students.

Mary also spoke about difference in relation to some of her White pupils .

My school has lots of different children from many diverse backgrounds. I think there are about 23 different languages spoken in our school. So we have to be mindful of what we are saying and what we are teaching. Many of the Polish students here can't speak much English and many of them are very religious, they are Catholics. We have to try and cater for them, just like we have to cater for the Muslim students and the other Somali students who are unable to speak English. It should not be about the colour of the person's skin, it should be about learning and creating an environment where the children can all learn *together* and learn *from each other* [original emphasis].

Brian (who was from a White, middle class background), explicitly referred to the issue of class.

There are some children in my class who are very different to me and to the other children. They come from backgrounds which are not so advantaged and some of them struggle. We have to think about the impact that - say for example - divorce or even unemployment has had on them. Because it does affect them in lots of different ways and when they have a setback like that, it can affect everything they do at school. That's one of the reasons it is important to know what is going on with a student. Some of the kids are from backgrounds that don't value education and so don't make an effort and that can affect their life chances.

Brian went on to discuss how it was important for teachers to be able to get a sense of the whole situation for their pupils, rather than just an individual sense from their pupils.

It is our job to make sure that we try and get children to learn and as teachers we have to do what we can. If some children do come from those backgrounds [which don't value education] we have to make sure we enable parents to see the value of education for their children and I can imagine that would be tough.

Here, Brian was referring to some White children at his school placement who revealed to him that their own parents had left school at 16 and did not see the value of their children staying on at school beyond this age.

However, it was Natalie, a Black British student who outlined the significant physical markers of difference.

I know that we have to be aware of difference and how that is perceived, but I have to go back to what I have always thought and that is that what you look like cannot be disguised. My appearance as a Black woman will always affect how people see me and the judgements they make about me. I have had experiences in my life where I know I have been treated in a negative way compared to a White person in the same situation. People are quick to make judgements about you – and because you are a Black female that happens a lot. And I don't like to say this, but yes it does happen in schools and it happens with other teachers, but more so with the pupils who make these judgements about us.

Natalie went on to explain how she dealt with this notion of being an 'outsider', in an environment where she should have been an insider.

As a trainee teacher, I should be seen as the teachers – with respect and be treated like that. I know I haven't qualified yet and they have more experience than me – but I am on my way to be qualified. But it just seems that these judgements are made about you – and I think it is because I am a Black female. So I do what I have always done and I am very professional, I speak clearly and articulately and do my job the best I can – then I cannot be criticised. It's a bit like the old saying, you have to be more than 100% because you are not White...I think sometimes being professional does make a difference – in the school it does – but in the real world I'm not so sure. There is always the notion that you are not quite seen as other people – you are always the second class citizen.

None of the White students referred to being treated differently based on their skin colour, several however did mention being treated differently due to their social class background. Gemma described herself from a **White** working class background.

I come from a family of manual labourers and I was brought up on a council estate and I notice that I don't speak like a lot of the other students or teachers. I would say a lot of them come from backgrounds that are more middle class, some of them have said that their parents are teachers – and so they are used to this kind of environment. I am not, so I do feel different to them sometimes.

For many of the trainee teachers, it was the type and mix of the school where they were located which affected their attitudes towards 'race', gender, class, religion and the 'other'. If

they were in a school which was ethnically and culturally diverse, they were forced to think about diversity, multiculturalism and how their teaching would affect students who may be different to the 'norm'. Becca, who described herself as a **White**, middle class student emphasised this.

If you are in a school that is ethnically mixed with all cultures and religions, you have no choice as a school but to address these issues. If you were in a school that was all **White** the assumption would be and has been that you don't have to deal with these issues – because it doesn't affect your school – and that is wrong, because these kind of things ['race', diversity and inclusion] affect *all* schools no matter who is in them or where they are located (original emphasis).

Discussion

The respondents demonstrated a complexity of responses with regard to their identities. Contrary to previous research, our research suggests that respondents were fully aware of issues to do with race, diversity and inclusion and were clearly engaged in how these issues affected them as trainee and future teachers (Causey et al 2000; Lander, 2011). On the one hand they were fully aware that their own identities would have an impact in the classroom when teaching, yet on the other hand they felt this should not be the case in reality. When asked about how they would define themselves and about their own identities, the majority of trainee teachers defined themselves in terms of their ethnic identity rather than their visual identity, based on colour. Yet at the same time, many respondents recognised that the physical markers of difference (such as their 'race') played a significant part in how they were perceived by others – both inside and outside of the school gates. In fact, many of the respondents felt that such notions of identity (White and Black) were crude and did not represent their culture, history or background. Many of them felt that such definitions of being White or Black did not mean or say anything about their identities when used on their own, rather the terms only had meaning if they were associated with their ethnic and cultural background. When trainee teachers spoke about White identities, they spoke about them in relation to being privileged, advantaged and in a position of power compared to those who were Black. Whiteness was considered the 'norm', it was an identity from which all other non-White identities were judged or based from. It was seen as the starting point of how other identities were defined; it was the one identity which was considered acceptable and the norm

not just in British society, but worldwide. Whiteness carried a universal connotation of acceptance and privilege.

Whilst White trainee teachers acknowledged the power and privilege associated with their Whiteness what was not clear was the extent to which these trainee teachers knew or understood their own role in addressing the impact of their Whiteness on Black pupils in their classes. There was an absence of discussions that showed that they had moved on from being aware of the racism and the power afforded as a result of their own White privilege and the lack of power experienced in Blackness to recognising their own role as social justice or anti-racist educators (Marx, 2004) or indeed being able to then disrupt White privilege (Hyttén and Warren, 2003).

In comparison, respondents understood that the category or identity of being Black was seen in opposition to being White, as being disadvantageous, as an identity that would immediately exclude individuals based on what they looked like (though not all of the respondents themselves had these views, but recognised that most of society felt and thought this way). Smith and Lander (2012) highlight the importance of what is the norm for students and indeed society. They note that the majority of teachers are White and school pupils' own experiences of teachers are White therefore where Black teachers are encountered they are considered different falling outside of what is considered the norm. As a result as suggested by Goffman (1969) (cited in Smith and Lander, 2012) this difference is then interpreted as deficient or deviant. This exclusion of individuals based on their physical characteristics such as skin colour becomes a dominant feature rendering the Black teacher as illegitimate and therefore not a 'good' teacher (Smith and Lander, 2012). It also brings to the fore the plethora of negative images and perceptions ascribed to Blackness through various media in society. This goes some way towards explaining the 'otherness' and positioning of Black teachers as outsiders resulting in their being treated differently. One of the challenges for teacher education is how to ensure that trainee teachers engage critically with these issues in order to challenge and address them within the classroom.

Other intersectionalities associated with identity were also apparent. Many of the respondents spoke about class and how this was related to 'race' and locality, for example some respondents indicated that where people came from made a difference to how they were treated. Many of the respondents spoke about class in terms of how they and others were treated. Locality in relation to class background was also an issue that many of the students

spoke about, particularly in relation to accent. What was interesting in relation to this issue was John's experience of being treated differently because of his 'posh' accent. This experience, he suggests affords some insight, though he admits not fully, into understanding how Black students experience being treated differently. However, what he fails to recognise is that his differential treatment is not founded upon him being seen to be different in a deficient way, as has been shown for Black students (Smith and Lander, 2012).

Many of the trainee teachers spoke about the training they received on their courses as being insufficient to deal with issues of 'race' and racism in the classroom. Although many did state that they were taught about theories and policies of inclusion, 'race' appeared as a side issue to this. Attempts to develop student teachers' understandings of White privilege and, Whiteness and its relationship to racism have been met with limited success. A number of researchers have found that students resist discussions of White privilege (Sleeter, 2001). Furthermore, Smith and Lander (2012) highlighted the challenges faced when teacher educators attempt to engage students in discussions of these issues turning the spotlight onto Whiteness results in hostility and rejection when led by a Black tutor and compliance and engagement in 'White talk' when led by a White tutor. Many of the respondents related identity to visible markers of difference, for example some were aware that they could hide their working class roots, but Whiteness was far more difficult to hide, just as a Black person was unable to hide their non-White identity. There has been a growing body of knowledge around multiple identities, (Brah and Phoenix, 2004), constellations of identity categories, (Youdell, 2006), and the idea of multiple belongings (Knowles, 2011). While trainee teachers were able to articulate their own understandings of their identity and the identity of others it was evident that there is a need for a greater engagement in the issue of identity and its multiple forms as well as a better integration of these issues within the ITE curriculum.

Conclusions

This research has demonstrated that identity plays a crucial role in the experiences of ITT students. The student responses show the complexities and different facets student teachers bring to their teacher training experiences. Their understandings of identity are woven within their understandings of a diverse range of differences such as their 'race', gender, class and also their own experiences of learning in the classroom. What is clear is the different facets of identity and how they translate into the classroom and how they are related to the' different

roles of trainee teachers as teacher and educator. They bring their own identities into the classroom and are aware of the impact these identities may have on pupils' learning. What is more important though is that they are all aware of how identity impacts on the learning experience. They all felt that inclusion and diversity were important goals to be aimed for, but not all of them believed they could be achieved. However, part of being a teacher for many of the respondents was the need to make a significant difference to the lives of pupils, even if this was in small steps, they felt it would lead to greater differences which could impact on the school and local communities. Whilst racism was recognised as something that continued to exist in society, the school was an environment in which racist views and prejudiced could be challenged, it was seen as a 'safe environment' in which these challenges could take place, for some this was an uncomfortable experience, but for others it was about 'making a difference'. While the trainee teachers received some training on diversity, inclusion and 'race' (albeit) in a theoretical fashion, all agreed that their institutions could and should be doing more to equip students with greater skills to deal with incidents of racism and prejudice as well as with a focused understanding of these issues. This was particularly the case for those who not only grew up in predominantly White areas, but also those who taught in predominantly White schools. For these trainee teachers, issues of 'race' and diversity were more important as the teaching of these issues helped to combat the stereotypes pupils had of Black and ethnic minorities when they attended all White schools. What is clear from the data is the recognition that trainee teachers were very reflexive about their teaching practice and all of the trainee teachers wanted to make a difference in their teaching, some by being inclusive in their curriculum, others by using engaging and innovative methods of teaching which would encourage their own students to question racism and prejudice. The respondents were also aware of the impact of their own identities on their teaching and how they could use these identities in the classroom to engage and motivate students in their own learning experience. Identities were also seen as shifting, changing and dynamic. Some of the trainee teachers were reflexive about where they had grown up and how their changing identities (such as their class position) had shifted once they had entered the teaching profession. What was clear however was that some identities were unable to be changed, those visible markers of difference, of being White and being Black remained firmly part of their role as teachers and educators. These identities were those which would continue to have a greater impact (in one way or another) on their teaching and learning experience.

The fact that issues of identity and diversity continue to be marginalised within ITE and taught as an ‘add-on’ is one that needs addressing. It may be that the decision making around what, when and where in the timetable these matters are addressed falls to White academics who themselves may not fully understand the implications and importance of providing sufficient time within the curriculum to truly embed these issues. It may be that Johnson, Lachuk and Mosely (2012) are correct in suggesting that ITE tutors also need to critically engage with their own understandings and historical narratives of how such discourses have developed in order to inform their pedagogic interactions with students on these matters.

The external pressures on ITE providers to respond to numerous and far reaching changes in education in recent decades may have contributed to issues of identity and diversity being progressively squeezed out of ITE. Providers are required to be responsive to developments within schools and to changes in government policy. Changes to the curriculum with a greater emphasis on the teaching of phonics, early maths, behaviour and Special and Inclusive education have moved the focus away from issues relating to race, ethnicity and identity. The QTS Teacher Standards that were introduced in 2007 specifically related to the need to take account of diversity and promote equality and inclusion in teaching (TDA, 2007). The new Teachers’ Standards introduced in September 2012 omit specific references to race equality, diversity and inclusion (DfE 2011). It is likely that changes in Teachers’ Standards is seen by providers as an indicator of government priorities and could be seen as the gauge for what should and should not be emphasised or included in teacher education. With less of a focus on these issues ITE providers may deem it necessary to further reduce time spent on these matters to focus on new government priorities. It is also important to mention that the current government’s drive to remove teacher education from universities and into schools through initiatives such as School Direct may have a direct impact on how these issues are addressed and potentially lead to schools addressing issues in training that are only relevant to their locality which may or may not include an emphasis on race equality, diversity or inclusion in its widest sense. have stated it ‘may’ have an effect. I think that this is a valid consideration and is raised as a question/possibility therefore I don’t think it needs a reference.

There are a number of recommendations that arise out of this research.

- ITE providers should provide explicit teaching on how to manage racism in schools with specific strategies and information on policy guidance.

- Opportunities should be provided for students to engage in discussions of their identities and how these may impact on their teaching.
- Issues of identity should be embedded across the whole of ITE provision ensuring that tutors themselves critically engage with their own identities drawing on this to support interactions with students.
- Further research in this area is needed, particularly the impact of the Equalities Act 2010 and how it affects the training of student teachers.

Whilst these issues are clearly important in providing an inclusive experience for future teachers, at the time of writing (February 2013) there is little evidence however to suggest that future government policy will take such issues on board. Consequently, this will raise further questions about how we address issues of race, diversity and inclusion in providing trainee teachers with the means by which they can deal with diversity and difference in the classroom.

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